

Acts and 206 persons including some SIMI activists have been arrested.

The State Government had suggested that the Government of India may examine the issue of banning the organization. Similar suggestions have been received from some other quarters as well. Such suggestions are carefully examined with reference to the available evidence before any view is taken in the matter.

The activities of all organizations having a bearing on maintenance of communal harmony in the country are under constant watch of law enforcement agencies and requisite legal action is taken, where necessary.

'Public Order' and 'Police' appear at Entry No. 1 and 2 of List-II —State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Hence, it is the primary responsibility of the State Governments to maintain public order and peace, including registration, investigation of crime and compiling of data relating to communal incidents.

The Government of India shares intelligence and sends advisories/alert messages to the States/UTs from time to time and Central Para-Military Forces are made available to them on specific request. A special force called the Rapid Action Force is deployed to deal exclusively with the communal tensions. Assistance is also being provided to State Governments for modernization of their policing infrastructure. In addition, detailed guidelines have been issued in October, 1997 for the promotion of communal harmony.

#### **Campaign to Protect Children From Sexual Abuse**

4284. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is a need for a campaign in the society to protect children from sexual abuse; and
- (b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to protect the children from sexual exploitation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) The Government of

India remains concerned about the phenomena of inter-country and intra-country trafficking in women and children and has formulated a National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children through strategies that cover prevention, legislation and law enforcement, provision of basic services to the victims, rescue and rehabilitation, awareness generation and social mobilization. The objective of the Plan of action is to mainstream and to reintegrate the women and child victims of trafficking in society.

The State Governments have set up State Advisory Committees and are taking action to notify Special Police Officers under Section 13 (1) of ITPA, set up Advisory Boards of Special Workers and NGOs in red light areas under Section 13 (3)(b) of ITPA, conduct regular raids and take measures for the protection and rehabilitation of rescue victims. A part from ensuring stricter enforcement of the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, the Government is attempting to bring about an over all improvement in the status of women and children especially the girl child through better education, health care, and economic empowerment of women. Schemes for empowerment and income generation like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Support of Training and Employment Programme (STEP), Setting up of Employment-cum-income generating units for Women (NORAD), Socio-Economic Programme (SEP), Rashtriya Manita Kosh (RMK), Swaran Jayanti Rojgar Yojana (SJRY), etc. are implemented especially in high supply areas of victims of prostitution and for rehabilitation of rescued victims of prostitution. Efforts are also made through print media and electronic media to project a positive image of women in society and to bring about changes societal attitudes towards women and girl child.

The Law Commission of India, in its 172nd Report on "Review of Rape Laws" has recommended amendment to provisions in the IPC, 1860 to provide stringent punishment for rape and child abuse. Criminal Law being on the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Report of the Law Commission is to be examined in consultation with the State Governments.